



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Ton Pentre Infants School

**School Street
Ton Pentre
RCT
CF41 7LS**

Date of inspection: October 2024

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Ton Pentre Infants School

Name of provider	Ton Pentre Infants School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	141
Pupils of statutory school age	59
Number in nursery classes	33
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 22.9%)	15.3%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 11.1%)	2.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/10/2009
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	19/06/2017
Start date of inspection	21/10/2024

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Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:
mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

The headteacher provides strong and compassionate leadership. She has established and implemented a clear vision that focuses on achieving high levels of well-being across the school community. High expectations for both pupils and staff foster an environment where 'happy faces, kind hearts, and enquiring minds' thrive. The school delivers a comprehensive curriculum aligned with all aspects of Curriculum for Wales. Regular interactions with a range of visitors and valuable community engagement opportunities further enrich learning experiences for pupils.

Staff encourage pupils, including those with additional needs, to contribute to shaping what and how they learn. Most pupils communicate confidently and enhance their skills through sign language from Nursery to Year 2. Reading progresses well, with most pupils becoming proficient in their use of phonics and beginning to read fluently by Year 2. Regular writing opportunities are provided, enabling older pupils to craft engaging texts independently.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills and their understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales is effective. Mathematics lessons systematically build pupils' understanding and proficiency. Younger pupils use tablet devices appropriately to support their learning and play. However, opportunities to fully develop pupils' digital competence as they move through the school are limited. Teachers understand and apply foundation learning principles effectively. Overall, they work well with teaching assistants to provide engaging learning experiences. However, in a few instances, teaching and learning experiences do not engage pupils as successfully.

There are strong, respectful relationships among staff and pupils. Adults respond sensitively to pupil needs, promoting self-emotional regulation and skilfully use restorative approaches when needed. Community engagement is evident, with initiatives like the 'Wiggles and Giggles' group fostering strong family ties.

Leaders address national priorities strategically, including Curriculum for Wales, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reform and bilingualism. Governors are proactive and supportive. They understand the school's financial challenges and have agreed on a plan with the local authority to address its deficit. Leaders use grant funding effectively to maximise pupil progress.

Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Share the best practice that exists within the school to improve the consistency of teaching
- R2 Strengthen opportunities for pupils to apply their digital skills progressively

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main evaluation

The headteacher provides strong, compassionate leadership and has established a clear vision that permeates all aspects of school life. Leaders have high expectations for pupils and staff, placing well-being at the heart of Ton Pentre Infants School. 'Happy faces, kind hearts, and enquiring minds' are evident across the school.

The school has developed a comprehensive curriculum that offers a wide breadth and depth of learning opportunities and experiences. It aligns successfully with the principles and purposes of Curriculum for Wales. The school invites various visitors to enhance teaching and work with pupils. Pupils experience a range of valuable visits to their local community and further afield that enrich learning experiences successfully.

Staff encourage pupils to contribute meaningfully to their learning, incorporating their ideas into stimulating experiences both indoors and outdoors, ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met. As a result, most pupils make sound progress from their starting points in nearly all aspects of learning.

Most pupils talk confidently about their experiences and listen well to staff and each other. From Nursery to Year 2, pupils enhance their communication skills by learning sign language, effectively using these skills during singing sessions and throughout the day.

The standard of reading across the school is good. Most younger pupils successfully learn to recognise letters and sounds. As they progress, they become proficient in using phonics. This supports them to read unfamiliar words systematically and confidently. By Year 2, many pupils are beginning to read fluently, and a majority read with appropriate expression.

Staff provide many opportunities for younger pupils to develop their emerging writing skills, for example by providing mark-making resources indoors and outdoors. By Year 2, older pupils write interesting texts independently for various audiences, using techniques such as simile to enrich their writing.

Staff use the Welsh language regularly, asking questions and giving instructions correctly. Pupils respond with increasing accuracy and a growing vocabulary, often using Welsh spontaneously with their peers. The school promotes Welsh as a living language that is integral to modern school life and their history, heritage and culture.

Carefully planned lessons develop pupils' mathematical skills systematically over time. Younger pupils develop a sound understanding of number and simple

mathematical concepts. By Year 2 many apply their knowledge to new situations well.

Most pupils understand the importance of online safety. Younger pupils develop a good awareness of digital technology and how it affects their everyday lives by playing with resources like tills and microwaves. They take digital photographs successfully. Older pupils use tablet devices appropriately, for example to access educational games. However, overall, opportunities for pupils to develop and use a wider range of digital skills are limited.

Teachers fully understand foundation learning principles and pedagogy. They work diligently with teaching assistants to deliver experiences that, in general, develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of learning well. Where teaching is most effective, staff judge the pace of learning well, engaging pupils in tasks and providing appropriate challenge and support. They ask probing questions to encourage deep thinking, such as discussing what is fair and unfair. They adapt provision based on pupils' learning and respond appropriately, providing helpful feedback to support their progress. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of learning is too slow and activities are drawn out, resulting in a minority of pupils becoming disengaged.

There is a strong sense of 'belonging' across the school, with nearly all pupils feeling valued and cared for. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive, caring and respectful. All adults respond sensitively to pupils' needs, helping them regulate emotions when necessary and re-engage with their learning. They promote acceptance of everyone within the school and community. Most pupils behave well and adults support pupils skilfully, for example to resolve any minor disagreements.

Leaders ensure that the school is at the heart of the community, offering valuable opportunities for engagement, such as the weekly 'Wiggles and Giggles' parent and baby group. The trusting relationship between families and the family engagement officer enables the school to give discrete and sensitive support. Leaders and staff are committed to ensuring that socio-economic disadvantage does not hinder achievement or limit experiences. This contributes well to the inclusive and caring culture at the school.

The school values pupils' opinions. The Rhondda Leaders pupil leadership groups are well-established. They work positively alongside leaders to promote improvements by playing an active role in school and the local community. For example, they encourage the use of Welsh within the local shops with posters and teach support staff weekly phrases to use around the school.

Spotlight: Fostering a graduated approach to providing additional support for learning

Leaders have a secure understanding of the varying needs of pupils. They work out pupils' needs effectively and provide a graduated level of support according to the specific needs using a pupil-centred approach. They co-ordinate beneficial interventions for phonological development, communication skills, and social and emotional development. Leaders tailor provision to ensure that pupils receive the right level of support to help them access learning. They track progress using highly effective strategies alongside a comprehensive tracking system. Leaders support colleagues to improve their practice through high quality professional learning opportunities. The school shares its good practice with other schools on behalf of the local authority.

Arrangements to collaborate within the cluster are beneficial. Professional learning and collaboration benefit staff and pupils as exemplified in a comprehensive curriculum offer that reflects the community's context well.

There is a robust cycle of monitoring and school improvement that accurately identifies key development areas, leading to sustained improvement in pupils' learning and well-being. Leaders and governors have successfully addressed several national priorities including ALN reform, Curriculum for Wales and bilingualism promotion. Governors have a good understanding of the important issues at the school, including the challenging financial situation. They have agreed to a plan with the local authority to address its financial deficit. They make effective use of grant funding, including the pupil development grant.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for site security do not give any cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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